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A COMMENTARY

Upon the

Present Condition

OF THE

KINGDOM

And its

Melioration.

viz England

Pen (ye Anabaptist) supposed to be ye Author of this seditious pamphlett.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

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BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA·

The Kingdoms Sickneſs, and its Cure, &c.

IT is not unknown to any perſon that is concern'd in the welfare of his Country, that there are now very ill ſymptoms in the countenance thereof; and not many particular perſons there are, who can ſay, that their private affairs receive not a malignant influence from the ill Craſis and indiſpoſition of the whole Body Politick: I ſhall therefore endeavour to give an account of this its malady, and propoſe the means of its redreſs and ſuccour; wherein I ſhall play the part of a bold Phyſician to a deſperate and Chronical Diſeaſe, neither will I handle the matter as if I were to deal with a nice and tender Lady, conſulting her eaſe, and the delight of her Palate, more than the benefit of a firm & laſting health, and therefore rejects the nauſeous Potion offer'd for her Cure: But I ſhall preſcribe, (if occaſion) a Vomit, both ſtrong and bitter, that will cauſe not only cauſe averſion in the taking, but likewiſe in the operation may put all parts into ſome perturbation, for the more effectual ſupport and comfort of them all: I ſhall not favour my Lancet, nor the Saw it ſelf if I find it neceſſary: To come to my deſign; The ſickneſs of the Nation appears evidently by thoſe ſymptoms that are upon it, an Atrophy, liſtleſneſs to Action, Paleneſs and fearfulneſs; I mean three things the main Indications of its weakneſs. 1. Want of Mony and Trade, the nouriſhment of a Commonwealth. 2. A Conſequent of the former; People are of low ſpirits, like Men expecting Ruine, they are without thoſe lively and vigorous deſigns they were wont to have when full of Money. 3. Fear and apprehenſion of danger from a Forreign Enemy; Theſe are the principal ſymptoms of which we complain at this day. The laſt of theſe I ſhall not need to ſay much to; For if the

Purſes and Stomacks of Engliſh-men be fraighted with a ſufficient Cargo, it will have ſuch influence upon their Courage, as to make them reſolute, and bold enough in oppoſing any Forreign undertakings againſt them, It being an improvement of their natural Genius, it will rather puſh them upon the ofſenſive part; This our Neighbour Nations are aware of; A French-man having obſerved, that *England* is like a great Beaſt, that can no otherwiſe be killed, but by being it ſelf acceſſary and aſſiſtant to its owa Ruine, or intangling it ſelf in the ſnare may be laid for it: Let us then endeavour to keep it alive, by applying good nouriſhment, by correcting the Humours, cleanſing the Blood; and when it is healthfully ſettled upon a good Baſis, freed from malignant humours, we may venture it to ſhift in all other encounters and hazards. Our buſineſs then is, to help in the two firſt particulars, For by them alone the laſt is made ſecure: There have been many attempts made of late for the Redreſs of the Former eſpecially; but by dealing too lightly, fearing to ſearch to the bottom, they do but make things worſe, and to ſtop one hole make three; Prohibiting Iriſh Cattle, French Goods, *&c.* I like not thoſe Phyſicians that apply themſelves to remove two or three particular ſymptoms, and leave the ſourſe and Cauſe of the Diſeaſe untouch'd; I ſhall therefore enquire into the very Springs and Original of our Diſtempers, and endeavour to ſhew, that without a deeper ſearch and ſtronger application, no good is to be expected.

The Tinker will tell us, that 'tis in vain to beſtow mending upon that Kettle whoſe bottom is grown thin with age and much uſe; and certainly there is ſomthing of the ſame nature in Kingdoms and Commonwealths, which in continuance of time, will require not emendation and alteration by parcels of new Laws, ſome whereof are made at one time, ſome another; ſome in one Century, ſome in many after; till at length they are multipli'd to ſuch a number that they becom to the Government like Patches to a Tinkers Kettle; which after it will be patcht no longer,

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fine, muſt have a new bottom; ſo alſo the Government muſt have a Reſtoration which is no longer capable of alteration and amendment in that part thereof which is weak and ill conſtituted. The reaſon whereof may be caſt upon the prevailing power of Time, which ſubjects all things to its Dominions, and nothing can be ſecure from its over-turning Influence; the ſtrongeſt Forts and Caſtles are batter'd down by it; Cities are metamorphos'd into a Cottage, and a Wilderneſs into a City; it removes Commerce, and Traffick, and Civility from one Country to another, and makes an Unwonted Village a well trad'd Port, and a Barbarous and Savage People nice and finical; And farther it differently influences the nature of Mankind, that thoſe of our generation are quite of another diſpoſition than in former ages; The civil Converſation we now cultivate, within Four or Five hundred years, was Military Diſcipline, and Feats of Arms; The Execution of Juſtice which is now performed with Gown and Scrowl, they did the ſame in Armour compleat, and with naked Sword. This alteration of mens inclinations and humours effected in proceſs of time, is the reaſon, that, though the Form and Manner of Government may continue perfectly and entirely the ſame, yet there are diſtinct Parts and Members thereof, which re-iterated Laws and emendations cannot preſerve from being the diſlike and burde- of the Subject, and ſo to be aboliſhed, and ſomthing ſubſtitun ted in the room thereof that is capable of obliging and comprehending the preſent Genius that has taken place; ſomething that may agree with thoſe inclinations of Men which have ſucceeded in the room of thoſe worn out by Time; and till this be done there will be a diſcraſie in the body Politick; there will be complaining and repining, and people will be ill at eaſe, diſſatisfied, unſettled, by reaſon of ſomething in the preſent Government that ſuits not now with their ſtomacks and appetites; and there cannot be introduced a Settlement and Compoſure the mother of all bleſſings in Commonwealths, till ſome ſtrong Medicine cauſe this to be diſgorged. Now as all Laws

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and Government designs the benefit of the People governed; that there be a Harmony and Agreement in all the parts thereof; so do they diligently avoid all things that may avert this harmony, and expel what is dossonant thereto, and causes that disagreement and uneasines which fills mens minds to the prejudice of their settlement, their amity, and consequently their Traffick one with another; Nay, though the Laws establisht by antiquity are still in Force for the preservation and maintenance of such Government, yet they must be abrogated or changed according to the present Genius, Manners and Inclinations of Men; for Laws are Arbitrary, and in circumstantial things may be brought to our Manners; whereas our Members have somthing of natural necessity in them, and cannot without prejudice and violence be brought to the Laws; I mean such things as are free and in our choice, not such as are of eternal necessity to be done or omitted; and likewise I mean the abrogation of such Laws as dis-agreeing with our present Inclination, will bring no dammage in other respects to the Publick. Now in this case, in my apprehension it is a Solicisme in Politicks, that Government being designed chiefly for the benefit of those that live under it, yet that the Laws should not comprehend and agree with the inclinations of the present generation, but of another worn off and gone: And this seems to be the right of a prevailing temper, as of a Conquerour that obtains anothers Country, not to be engaged to the former Laws he finds there, but to give them from himself. Thus when it was in fashion, and the humour prevailed of making Churchmen great, and rich, and honourable, Laws were directed and promulgated to this purpose: If the fashion come again to contemn and slight them, and bring them down, the Laws ought to favour us in it, and not to suffer a discording note, to prejudice the harmony whereon the publick establishment and settlement is founded. Having seen that the Publick dis-satisfaction may give occasion to change some particular part of the Government; we must enquire how it may be manifest,

manifeſt, what muſt be done for the relief of it, and that we miſtake not the minds and deſires of people thus unſatisfyed; In a word, this may be known by the general reſentments of the moſt, or wiſeſt, or ſobereſt of the people; If theſe generally agree in one vote as it were, either tacitly or expreſsly, by plain teſtimony, or ſuch ſigns as are equivalent thereto, of a dislike of a Conſtitution in the Government, that is no eſſential part thereof, which ſerves to irritate them, and is the Mother of oppreſsion, if it be proteſted againſt, and forſaken by moſt, contemned by others, and ſlighted by all, it may be ſaid to be the diſcording Note, and hurtful to the harmony of the publick repoſe and conſent. But perhaps this will not be a ſufficient Plea for its expulſion unleſs other things concur; In the mean time thus much we have got through the alterations of mens inclinations, Laws muſt be remitted, and perhaps ſome leſs eſſential part of Government changed, or elſe there will be an unſatisfyedneſs and diſcraſy amongſt the People; or thus in time mens Inclinations are changed, and the Conſtitutions of Government that are oppoſite thereto muſt be altered. If we look for examples of this, we may find in all Hiſtories infinite thereof; Thus the people of *Iſrael* were ſick and diſcontented for a King, and no means to ſatisfie them but by indulging this humour: This alſo may be obſerved in the Roman Government, and alſo in the Commonwealths of *Greece*; in our age me may obſerve the like; *France* will allow no priviledge to the Pope in Secular Affairs and Revenues of the Clergy in that Dominion, though they ſtill own his Authority. The *Netherlands* could not ſwallow the Inquiſition, and *Venice* ſoon grew ſick of the ſubtile practiſes of the Jeſuites. Many might be heaped to this purpoſe. And thus much may ſerve for Apology, if we find that the ſtate of things do recuire ſome change in a leſs material part of Government, that it is no new thing, but ſuch as time does in every age produce.

To proceed then, It may be demanded whether there be any ſuch thing amongſt us, That this unſatisfyed humour is prevalent.

valent with us, may be known from converſe and ſociety of Men, and their mouths are filled with complaints of the badneſs of the times, wiſhing for, and expecting ſome change of affairs that may give them ſome ſettlement and peace: Likewiſe it may be known whom it aims at, and what this burden is by the open proteſtation of the greateſt part of the Nation, by the careleſs and remiſs carriage of others, and by open contempt and deriſion of many, which is the preſent Eccleſiaſtical Government; This all the different ſorts and Opinions do proteſt againſt; This wiſe Men and Polititians do barely ſuffer and allow as far as their Intereſt is concernd with it, without any zeal for its continuance. The third are, the Wits and Atheiſts of the age who contemn and deride it: As that we may ſafely conclude it is the publick nuiſance and diſguſt of the Nation: and as an ill humour that is at enmity with the reſt of the humours in a body natural, is the occaſion of a perturbation, and that its actions are performed with leſs life and freedom than they were wont. So likewiſe this dis-agreeing part in the body Politick from the other parts, may be ſaid to be occaſion of its lowneſs of courage, and unwillingneſs to act in the matters which concern its welfare, as Trade, and the like. But if we look into the concerns of Trade, the life of our nation, and of the Body Politick, and to the Nation more attentively, we ſhall find that our conditon is ſuch, that we are near loſt, unleſs we ſhall make this one part a Sacrifice to the preſervation of the whole; and we are not now ſo low in our own eſteem, or the eſteem of Forreigners, but by means thereof we may raiſe up our heads that lie in the duſt, and not only obtain a firm and laſting conſtitution of Health and Integrity, in the advancement of our wealth at home, but we may be enabled to make our ſelves great enough to offer ſome attempts abroad, to ſerve our ſelves our ſelves of the ſpoils of other Nations, and take our ſhare in the Ruines of the houſe of *Auſtria*, and once again retrieve our ſullied glories, and re-aſſume the Palms that were wont to be the Merits of our victorious Armies.

It being then thus with us, that moſt men complain of the badneſs of the times; The Labourer has no work, the Husbandman hath no price for his Corn whereby to pay his Rent; the Grazier gets little for his Wool, Cloth lies upon the hands of the Clothier, ſtrangers run away with our Fiſhing-trade, for want of Mony or willingneſs in our own Nation to encourage it at home; The power of *France* grows formidable, and Mony muſt be had to put us in a poſture of Defence; when yet the people are ſo dreined already, that they are ſcarce able to pay more. If we come to conſider the original of theſe evils, it can be no other then that our Money is taken away by the late Taxes; for Trade is then moſt full and redundant, and with it all things elſe, when Mony is equally (that is in moderate portions ſuitable to every mans condition) diſtributed throughout the whole Nation; when each particular man has ſufficient for his neceſſity, and the condition of his life and calling: for Mony being thus generally diſtributed, Men will (to find themſelves imployment, if for no other reaſon) be turning their Mony into Goods, and their Goods again into Mony, and every body will confer ſomthing to the general emolument of Traffick; ſo that the means of advancing Trade, is ſo to influence every particular perſon in the Kingdom, that he may have Mony according to the degree of his Calling, and to carry on the deſigns be they ſmaller or greater which he has undertaken: and by the rule of contraries, the way to deſtroy Trade, is to draw the Mony from the Body of all the People, and gather it from all the particulars of the Commonwealth; and the more this is done, the more the materials of Trade are taken away, and conſequently it muſt weaken and conſume, ſo that we do plainly ſee the Cauſe of the evils at this time; The Parliament having granted the King ſuch Immenſe ſums of Mony, and that collected upon the whole Body of the Subject, which alone were capable to manage a great Trade; and beſides theſe, Exciſe and Hearth-mony collected alſo as the other, but never known till of late; to this may be added the new Building of

LONDON, especially in the concerns thereof; so that putting these things together, we may wonder we are not much lower and weaker than we seem to be at this time: Well may Landlords complain of the fall of Rents, and have their Lands thrown into their own hands, when by their own Acts they have taken away the means of Traffick, and those materials that Men must work upon for their support: For as in a natural Body there is required nourishment to keep it in life and consistency; and also this nourishment must have a Vehicle, which is the Blood, whereby it may be conveyed to all parts of the Body; Now if you take away this too often, and in too great quantities, no wonder if at last the Body grow weak, and unable to perform what otherwise might be required of it: When the Blood is perfectly distributed through all the parts, and permitted to take its free and natural Circulation; So it is in a Body Politick, Trade is its nourishment, maintains its life, and keeps it in heart, gives it a healthful Constitution, and preserves it from sinking by any weakness within, and enables it also to repel external violence; The Vehicle to convey this nourishment to all the parts for their relief, is Mony, the very Blood of the Body Politick, of which, the more we take from this Body, the nearer we do bring it to a Consumption and inability to sustain it self. Farther, we must not imagine that the burden is made lighter when divided amongst so many Interests, which as to privat concerns perhaps is not so much perceived at present, but as to the concerns of Trade, the whole Nation is but as one Man, and so much as you take there-from, so much you take from Trade and the livelihood of the Nation; which in time will return with more weight upon particulars, as we find by experience in Rents, Wool, &c. This being the condition of the Nation drayned to this faintness and weakness as at this day, and still there is occasion for more Mony, and those no lighter neither, such as to put us in a posture of Defence in case of any attempt from a Forreign Enemy, which our present circumstances leave us not without cause to apprehend, also

to take off the burden that lies upon the Kings Revenue; and further, if we can, to recover those eruptions and devastations made upon our Trade and Livelihood, to set us upon our legs, that we may shew something of antient valour in times of such action and enterprizes as are now on foot; But how shall this be done? to take more blood from the Publick, is to bring us down beyond hopes of Becovery, after so many plentiful evacuations. But some course must be taken, and which way shall we turn? shall we exenterate our own bowels, and sacrifice our Lives and Livelihoods for our Liberties? shall we destroy our selves, that we may save our selves; and give away the support of our lives for the defence of them; or to what purpose is it to defend them from outward violence, when they must thus sink from within, though they should be secured from without? Is it not better we cast about, and see if there be not some other means of Relief? Can we not find an Ulcerated part in this Body, which being lopt off, that nourishment which it too potently draws to it self, may by its separation be distributed through the whole Mass, for the support of its weakness and indisposition; To be short, there cannot be any better means or other method to compleat our hapiness, and to make amends for all our evils, than to take away the Lands of lazy and deceitful Clergy-men; there seems to be a fatal necessity upon us to do it, they being not only useless, but a bitter Fountain, that sends forth streams to the annoyance of the greatest and meanest of the people; and when it shall appear that this may be done with honesty and Honour, with right of Justice, with safety to the Government, and advancement of Religion, as I shall shew; The design will be more worthy to be put in execution: Supposing then, that the Tithes throughout England be allotted to be the Portion of the Clergy, as in the old Law by Divine Constitution, which being equally divided amongst them throughout England, will amount to 100 l. a year or better, an ample Revenue for a Clergy-man that will answer the ends of his Calling, as we shall shew hereafter; And in case any

Controverſe ariſe, it may be determined by the general Aſſembly of the County, or by the gravet and wiſer amongſt them; but by all means that their hands be kept off from Secular buſineſs, which belongs not to their Function upon any account, Having ſo well provided for them; Let their Lands and Manors, &c. be given to the Publick Benefit, and that the Parliament have the power over it, to appoint Officers about the Concerns of that Revenue, and to take an account of them, and that it be by their prudence and Care ſo diſburſed to the ſeveral Affairs that may require its aſſiſtance, to Demiſe throughout the Nation thoſe Lands for the raiſing Mony upon a ſudden exigency: That part of theſe rents be imply'd in Maritine affairs, the building of Buſſes, Galleys and other Veſſels for the Fiſhing, likewiſe for greater Ships as ſhall be neceſſary; and for mantaining and repairing Forts and Walled Towns. Another part for the Improvement of Trade by Land, there may ſmall Stocks be derived into all parts of the Kingdom to ſet the poor on work; Likewiſe in divers parts that Work-houſes may be built for the Improvement of our Manufactures in the manner of Hoſpitals, wherein the lame and blind, and all ſorts may have ſome imployment whereby to get their own livelihood; and alſo others may make ſome advantages by their labours. Likewiſe other Houſes may be built for the Benefit and Improvement of the Mineral Trade, whither may be ſent to works of Induſtry, ſuch whom we now too ſeverely deliver to death upon ſmall offences; All theſe Methods will not diminiſh the revenue, but increaſe it; For if well managed, it will return into their hands again perhaps double; As ſuppoſe Fifty Thouſand Pound a year be allowed, and well managed in theſe uſes, this Mony lies not dead, as in Hoſpitals or ſuch Foundations, but will perhaps return Fourſcore thouſand pound again, or more, for the benefit of the publick, and yet the Nation is advantaged as much as that Fifty thouſand pounds comes to, and perhaps more than if it were given without any return: So that beſides the Commodities of our Country well improv'd,

and

and every man has work and dealings enough; there will be an ample foundation for Banks of Piety, for encouragements to advance Trade, as to send Men into Forrein Countreys upon the Publick Charges, for the advancement of Trade; to learn skill in Manufactures, to improve Commerce; also liberal Sallaries and Rewards for such as have deserved well of the Commonwealth by useful Inventions, Fighting for its Defence &c. Hence also Allowance may be given to decayed Gentlemen; such whose Estates are incumbred by Debts; and more by Interest may hence be relieved: Out of this the necessities of the KING may often be supply'd without burden to His Subjects; and it will be as an eternal Cement to unite the hearts of the King and his Subjects; The People shall not be burdened with Taxes, or else made able to pay them; and thereby the King shall be freed from the Complaints and Grievances of the People, more burdensom than any part of administration: Thus shall these Lands which have hitherto mantained unjust usurpation, which served Pride and Malice to distress and grieve Mankind in all Orders and Degrees; By this means they shal become the happy Instruments of universal benefit to all Orders and Degrees amongst us: Now if the Remedy must be contrary to the Distemper, then have we a very apt Remedy for all our evils, which as they have been brought upon us by dreyning the Nation of so much of its Blood; so shall our Cure be by deriving these refreshing Springs into all the exhausted and weak'ned parts of the Kingdom; and we may promise our selves from the wisdom of the Parliament, that no corner of the Kingdom shall be excluded from the benigne Influence thereof: The young Man may be advanced into Trade without any Fortune of his own; the poor Man shall have work, the Tradesman Business, the Mariner is made happy, the Ingenious rewarded, the Unfortunate relieved, and the whole Nation so exalted and Improved, that we shall be like the *Israelites* returning from Captivity as Men in a Dream, scarce believing on a sudden that happiness which we see and feell:

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Now, it being ſo, that Epiſcopal Govrnment expelled, ſuch Bleſſings follow as are like the Glories of the Morning, Sun to Midnight darkneſs; Is it not to be wiſhed, that the King and Parliament having laid ſuch continued burdens upon the Subject, would conſult their own Honour and Reputation, and tranſmit their Names and Memory to Poſterity with ſome ſweet odours of Praiſe and Bleſſing; that they would once in ſo many Eſſays do ſomthing whicq may prove the Univerſal Benefit of the Civil State, and of Religion, which may make their Fame Glorious and Renowned to the preſent and future Generations, and may bring a bleſſing from Heaven to proſper and eſtabliſh all other their undertakings. What though our Anceſtors eys were blinded to give the beſt of the Kingdom to Clergy-men, and to confirm them by Laws; Yet ſince our eyes are open, to diſcover the Cheats and folly thereof, we ſhould commit a greater folly than they, if we in ſo great neceſſity ſhould ſuffer them to enjoy what was ſo exorbitantly given, or rather what was gotten by Fraud and Collvſion; Have not we the ſame power to nullify Laws made againſt the Common good, as they had to eſtabliſh the ſame; And have we not yet more Reaſon, ſince they granted them through Colluſion and deceit, whereas every day diſcovers to us, that there is no neceſſity and occaſion thereof; And moreover, it is returned into the boſom of their Poſterity with a hundred Fold diſadvantage inſtead of Benefit.

Now though it were enough to ſay, that the Supreme Law did require this, even the ſafety of the Kingdom being concern'd in it; There being a neceſſity that all Government be directed according to the courſe and exigeney of the preſent circumſtances and conditions in which they live to whom the mannagement of affairs is committed, or elſe it loſeth its end, and is not eſtabliſhed for the preſervation of the Subject, his peace and ſettlement, but by a kind of Solæciſm in Politicks, for the preſervation of that which is no more, even a worn off generation gone to their Fathers. Yet I ſhall add farther, that

there ir Right and Equity enough in the thing; For 1st. They obtained their Lands by Colluſion and Fraud. 2ly. They manged them ſo as to be the Inſtruments of oppreſſion and diſturbance to all Mankind, and to this Commonwealth in particular; which is Treaſon enough in a ſound ſenſe, if not directly, yet interpretatively: As for the Imputation of Sacriledge we ſhall ſee more hereafter. But the Colluſion and deceit will appear plainly, if we conſider, that theſe Lands and Priviledges were granted in ſuch an age and time of Darkneſs, when nothing of the Scripture, or of the Truth was known, and leſs of Religion practiſed; Men pretended then a great deal of Zeal for Religion, but really abominated the plainneſs and ſimplicity that was in the Goſpel, and the ſpiritual exercitſe it did require; So that all their Zeal was ſpent in purſuit of a ſtrange Worſhip, things diametrically oppoſite to the Goſpel of Truth; whereby they might make themſelves Great or Honourable, that they might abound with all things that could miniſter to their Pride, their Luxury and Exceſs, and what ever elſe was contrary to the rule of ſound Doctrine. To accompliſh theſe their extravagant and wicked deſigns; They firſt trouble and muddy the pure Springs of Chriſtian Doctrine and Practice, br ng firſt Liturgies, Forms and Ceremonies of Worſhip, and then went on to Altars, Croſſes, Bowings, Waſhings, Images, Maſſes, and Infinite ſuch trumpery, to amuſe mens minds with a ſhew of outſide Worſhip; Then they ſet apart multitudes o' Men devoted to theſe wickedneſſes, who had no other Imployment but to read Maſſes, filling the world with Lies, and Forgeries of Miracles, whereby to bring the world into Fear and Superſtition, chiefly to induce Men to impart to them of their wealth and ſubſtance; relating wonderful Apparitions and Viſions of ſuch who had been favourable to their greedy deſires, ma ing them no leſs than Saints, that others might be incouraged to follow their works; And more Fuel might be added to their ungodly Luſts: But if any did diſcountenance them in their Deſigns, or not fulfil their deſires to the utmoſt, they had a ſer-

viceable

invention of Purgatory, whereby they would make up their Markets; For their Prayers were of no Force to deliver Men from thence, unleſs they were well paid in hand before they begun the work: Alſo Confeſſion, and Extreme Unction were none of their meaneſt Engines to cheat the world; For by virtue of theſe being near the Beds of departing Souls, they made ſucceſsful uſe of the opportunity, either to Forge Wills and Donations, or elſe by aggravating their ſins, and the torments of Purgatory, get from them what men in deſpair, (and no more capable of enjoyments in this world, and therefore prone enough to throw them away, (eſpecially where there appeared hopes of a return in another) were willing to part with. Add to this, that having locked up the pure Truth in an unknown language, and few Bibles alſo to be got by reaſon of the unlearnedneſs of the age; All their Devotions they comprehended in Rituals and Rotaries, &c. All their Religion was external Pomp, Ceremony and Magnificence, puzled and intricated with a thouſand inventions and devices, that had no relation to it, otherwiſe than to deſtroy it from the Earth: Now by theſe means they had got the Keys into their hands; But what Keys? even thoſe of the bottomleſs Pit, to ſink men in Perdition. But thus it was, and by theſe evil arts they had made themſelvs the oracles of the age, through whoſe mouth all Religion and Devotion muſt proceed; They call'd themſelves the Church, all their Conſtitutions & Injunctions muſt now be irrefragable, and they muſt needs pretend to be Infallible, ſince they ſaw all matters of Religion depending upon them, and nothing was ſeen or known but what was their pleaſure to apoint and declare: And who could convince them of Errour in the midſt of darkneſs? when all light of the Goſpel, and of Truth it ſelf ſeemed to be extinguiſhed? Thus have they overthrown that pure and undefiled Religion, denying the Lord that bought them, and betraying him with Judas into the power of his Enemies; But he riſeth again to take vengeance of his Oppreſſors. But theſe things conſider'd, it is no wonder

that

that our Ancestors could not see through this mist and darkness of errour, thicker than that of Ægypt, which had by this time overspread the face of the whole earth. But partly mistaking a generation of Deceivers, for the true Church, thought it Honourable to conferre what they could to its Greatness, partly through fear of Purgatory, and to deliver their Souls from that torment which they were taught to believe, partly to save their souls; For which purpose they were taught that these Donations were effectual, settled upon them their Lands, which were afterwards confirmed to them by Law upon the same account; For in Magna Charta there is express mention made by the King of this end of his Grants, (viz.) the saving of his Soul: Now that they were deluded in these Donations, we need go no farther than the universal consent of those Churches who have shaken off the Papal Usurpation, who have all declared against Praying for the Dead as insignificant; and do acknowledge that all Donations given to the Clergy, could have no effect (as was pretended,) to save mens Souls: Add to this, there is no colour for it in Scripture, and was only then invented as a serviceable Engine to deceive men of their Estates, and thereby to Benefit and Inrich that Idolatrous Church: Which being consider'd, that these Conditions on which they obtained their Lands were proposed *dolo malo*, and farther, that they are not kept according to the will of the Feoffor; Those Customs being now abolished of Praying for Souls, upon which account they held many considerable Lands; Whether the Statute of *Marlbridge* or other Laws will extend to redeem those Lands, I leave to the learned in the Law to judge. If it be alledged, that these Lands, and their Priviledges have been confirmed to them all along under Protestant Princes; and that the King takes an Oath at his Coronation to defend them: It may be answer'd, that such use and benefit of those Lands may be permitted them by those who were Proprietors thereof; Not that the right of the Successor should be prejudic'd thereby: Or perhaps they understood not so fully

their condition in respect to that Right, and therefore more justly accrues to us as the discoverers; or else they had not the same necessity to re-assume it? For our condition is such, by Divine Providence appointed, that there is no other means to save us from Ruine. I shall here add something much to this purpose out of *Grotius*; *Si Lex fundetur in præsumptione aliqua facti, quod factum revera ita se non habeat tunc ea Lex non obliget.* *Seneca* says, *Demens est qui fidem præstat Errori*; *Grotius* also brings the opinion of *Bodinus* much to our purpose. *Bodinus censet iisdem ex causis Regem sive aliena fraude & dolo, sive errore circumventum, sive metu restitui posse.* In another place the same *Grotius*, *Sed hoc quoque sciendum est posse subditis jus etiam quæsitum auferri per Regem duplici modo, aut in Pœnam, aut ex vi super-eminentis Dominii; Sed ut id fiat ex vi super eminentis Dominii primum requiritur utilitas publica.* Again, *Illud quoque à multis traditum beneficia principum quæ liberaliter sunt concessa semper posse revocari.*

As concerning the Kings Oath, I shall only propose the words of the same *Grotius*, *Ut valeat Juramentum, oportet ut obligatio sit licita; Quare nullas vires habebit jurata promissio de re illicita aut naturaliter, aut Divina interdictione, aut etiam humana.* If this be not sufficient, he adds farther, *Imo etiamsi res quæ promittitur non sit illicita, sed majus bonum morale impediens, sic quoque non valebit Juramentum.*

As for the Imputation of Sacriledge, we have thus much to say. 1. That the word has a very large signification, and it is hard to be punctually decided what is Sacriledge, and what not; But 2. Of this we are certain, that extreme necessity cannot be præscribed to by it; For we find *David* made use of the *Shew-Bread* in this case: And it is farther to be noted, that I have not directed that they should be appropriate to any private use, but to be preserved as a support of the Commonwealth in all degrees where there may be necessity, and so to become the publick Endowment; For it is not to be applyed to the use of any particular Man, or Men, so as to be appropriated to them;

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In being like *Judas*'s Mony, the price of a Saviour, with which the *Jews* bought the Potters Field to bury strangers in, when it was returned by *Judas*: So these Lands also ought to be converted to the benefit and relief of the Poor, the Stranger, and Necessitous, which may very well consist with the method I have before mentioned.

But farther, we may do well to consider how they have behaved themselves in the Fruition of these ample Priviledges they have been invested with: I shall not now trouble the Reader with a particular recitation of those disturbances and molestations wherewith our Kings and Nobles, as well as Commons have suffered under Popish Bishops; Nor yet the Practices of our late Bishops of the Reformation, how they oppressed the Subjects, and overthrew all Laws and Constitutions of the Kingdom, to set up their own Power, and satisfie the lust of tyrannous and absolute Dominion, abusing the goodness of our Kings to this purpose, which things have been shewed already by others. It shall be sufficient to observe, that when by the Reformation the Scriptures were opened, and put into every mans hands for their Direction, there were found very few whose minds were disengaged from the Superstition of Popery, but manifested an inclination to embrace the Scripture in the true and native plainness of it, and to yield obedience to the sincere practical Duties therein contained; And at that time it seemed to have an Influence upon the Clergy as well as others, who minding the calling the People off from Popery, or Confirming them in the Reformed Religion, or building them up in Faith and good Works, were not much sollicitous of Dominion and Jurisdiction, but depended upon the Kings Grace, not only for any Authority to be exercised by them, but also for their very Lands and Revenues; And he that had so boldly spoiled Abbies and Monasteries, bringing down proud and stately Fabricks to the dust, and Confiscating their Revenues, could also upon the least occasion offer'd, or tending to oppose his Projects, have caused them to taste of the same Lot

with their Brethren; These two things were concurring the Truth of Christ, and Fear of the Prince to whom they were subject, must needs make tolerable Bishops, though it is probable they were good men notwithstanding. But as it was in the Bishops of *Rome*, who of tollerable Bishops at the first, when their Fortunes were small, and the Secular Authority too Potent to be resisted, became intolerable Usurpers of uncontrollable Power, when once they had settled their Foot, and enlarged their Dominions; So likewise the old Serpent had the same Game to play with us; For after a little time having settled themselves by Law, they began to look about, and think of amplifying their Power, making all men submit thereto, and to suppress all opposition, and root it out; And now they held no longer of the Kings Grace, but *Jure Divino*, still augmenting and riveting themselves by degrees in Secular Authority, and exceeding therewith from the Light and Purity of Scripture, to a hatred thereof, and the Preaching of it, and all such as owned it in Publick, declaring and teaching it, or in private; Till at length no Remonstrances or Petitions to the contrary notwithstanding; They had erected a Court of Commission, and had brought a Spanish Inquisition amongst us, and proceeded to other acts, by corrupting or delaying Justice, that it was hard to say whether the Subject was more oppress, by being deprived of the Priviledges the Law allows him, or the Bishops more Tirants & Usurpers in going so far beyond the limits that the Law had set them; every where acting with such a Power as the Effects made appear to be unlimited: They having been thus seduced by Riches and Greatness, to abandon the Truth and Purity of Christian Religion, Yet other Persons wanting that Temptation, had no reason to submit to a domineering Lust, against the Testimony of Truth and Religion, nor lend their assistance to maintain a laizy and usurped authority; So that animosities must needs be kindled; and as the Bishops grew more in Authority and Dominion, and farther departed from this Truth, the Malice and Rage of the one increased, which

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added ſtubborneſs and reſolution to the other; Theſe Cauſes of diſſention were kindling and fomenting a long while, till the Biſhops at laſt ſo far abuſed the good nature of K. *Charles* I. ſo far to the oppreſſion of the Truth, and the maintainers of it, and it was but the Name of a Puritan that muſt make a Man lyable to all the Inconveniences of a tyranical Court, to be ſuſpended from his Office, and the Benefits of it; to have his Study and Houſe ranſack'd, forced to accuſe himſelf by an Oath *Ex Officio*; and beſides waiting upon Vexatious and Dilatory Suits, without liberty of Pleading or anſwering to any thing that was objected againſt him: He muſt thus ſpend his Time and his Eſtate to the Ruine of Himſelf and his Family. Theſe and other things became ſo general a burden, that there was no redreſs but by taking up Arms againſt thoſe unjuſt Invaders of their Liberty, whoſe original Greatneſs being eſtabliſht by Deceit and Falſhood, their Authority a Uſurpation, their Government, though it had been Legal, yet ſo unreaſonably abuſed, to the diſturbance of the Peace and Liberty of the Subject; It were not in the Kings power, though they decoy'd him to their Party; nor was it juſt and right in him to defend or abett them, much leſs to eſteem what was done againſt them, to be done againſt Himſelf, His Royal Crown, or Sacred Authority; He is to be the Miniſter of Juſtice, and this muſt be adher'd to, though with the loſs of whatſoever is moſt dear to him; Tis He acts againſt his own Life & Crown, He betrays his Scepter and Authority, and is guilty of Treaſon againſt himſelf, when he takes part with the unrighteous, with cruel and blood-thirſty men, to diſturb the Peace of his true and Loyal Subjects; to ſpoil them of their Lives and Fortunes, and leave the Children of Innocent Men to the extremity of Sorrow and Diſtreſs: Thus were we at length engaged in a Civil War, and by a ſoul and reproachful Diſaſter contrary to the deſires and wiſhes of the Nation: The Hand of the Subject was imbrued in the Blood of his King; and ſhall we think theſe Men Innocent in all this? Then may it be ſaid that he

who

who shall all manner of ways exagitate his enemie, and leave no part of malice unattempted to hasten the destruction of him, who hath no other quarrel to his Persecutor, but the desire of his amendment; if he shall drive him to the utmost and last extremity, so that he knows not which way to turn, and finds no possible means of Recovery and safety, but by disarming his Persecutor, and captivating that Power that was so unjustly drawn out against him: This Person thus disarmed, may then complain he is abused and set upon, his Life and Fortune assaulted upon no ground or reason, he is Innocent, and only guilty (if that be guilt) of endeavouring to bring his Enemy to a right mind; that is, to be his Vassal, that he may set his foot upon the neck of his Enemy, and make him know, that HE also is a God that ruleth in the Earth: The same imbittered Spirit seems to continue still with us, and has not been without its Essays of disturbing that Peace and repose which we at present enjoy; But their wings are cut, and their nails pair'd, Men do generally do see into the cheat, and every day brings fresh discoveries thereof, and it were strange that now mens minds are so busily imploy'd in the search of Knowledge and Improvement of Science to that degree, as to have arrived at such attainments in one Century, as we do not find that former ages were at any time Masters of. It were strange I say in such increase of knowledge, if we should be still blind in matters that concern Religion; That we should not apprehend that all that Pomp and stateliness is vanished, for the support and mantaining whereof, the Clergy were Invested with such great Possessions, and ample Priviledges. I have two things more especially, which with some reason I may impute the occasion of them to the present Church-Government. 1. The present Atheism and Debauchery that the Age and Nation labour with, which though it may have its rise from some other Cause, yet it receives at least strength & Confirmation, partly from the empty Formality of the Clergy, who have apparently no other Designs but their own gains, partly from the open

contradiction

contradiction they see between their Life and Manners, and their Doctrine; who are all the week after refuting and pulling down that in their Practice, which a few empty words of speculation, like the Calf that *Aaron* made to guide the People, and to as much purpose) set forth on the first day of it: They see that whilst these Men Preach against worldliness, they themselves are the most desirous, greedy and ambitious of all the world can afford; Whilst they preach against Drunkenness and Debauchery, yet Themselves are never satisfyed with those advantages of Riches & enlarged Revenues, which serve but to keep these Vices in heart and life. They may add with some shew of Reason, Perhaps we should not hear one word from them of these things, did they not find the Trade gainful, and the means to be great in this world, was to profess to deny it; They will go on, sure these Men do but tell us Stories and Fancies, and maze in a wilderness of Tattle and empty sounding words; For if there were any reality in the thing they propose, it would sure have some effect upon themselves, to moderate their Projects and Desires. Such kind of Conclusions as these they may draw from a Religious Government, stamped for true and Orthodox by Publick Authority, Yet thus betraying it self to its own Condemnation: As for the Dissenters, they will appear to these Men silly deluded Creatures that know nothing.

The 2. Thing is, the various Opinions and Phrensies that have of late infested our Nation, may be thought to have their original from hence, next to the Craft and Subtilty of our grand Enemy; For Englishmen (to speak without flattery,) are generally lovers of Truth and Integrity, and somwhat stiff and rigid in those Principles they adhere to, especially if they imagine them agreeable to Truth and Honesty; When therefore they had embraced the Gospel and the Reformation, and conceiving withal, it manifested an opposition to the Ecclesiastical Government; To keep to the one, they grew into dislike of th'other, which took deeper root when this Government began

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Vex and Beat their Fellow-servants, and so instead of lessening the difference, make the gap wider. Now what must they do in this Case, the Government had thrown them off, and pursued them as Enemies to it; They were too rigid to quit those Principles they had taken up with such appearance of Truth; And the Government would not yield to such whom they thought must receive and not give Laws, according to the pride of Usurpation; So that they were forced to wander as Sheep without a Shepherd, or rather whose Shepherd was unfaithful; Some took one way, some another, as their Fancy led them, to *Munster*, or *Geneva*, or worse, till at last all things came into Confusion. Thus hath Ecclesiastical Authority given birth to disscentions, and Fuel to continual Animosities, administred strength and growth to Atheism & Irreligion; By it Men have been staved off from Unity, and peaceable enjoyment of their Lives; Thereby they have been plunged in the depth of errour and distraction; have been driven to sheath their Swords in the Bowels of their Brethren; And that no wickedness might be left un-atchieved, the sad effects of all this hath been yet depending upon, and a Consequent to the former, the spilling the Blood of the Sacred person of their King; These evils hang together as a Chain of many Links, whose first Link is the denying, not hearkning to, rejecting and disobeying the word of God, and the light of the Gospel; Bring in this, and the rest follow as part of the Chain; But establish the Truth of Christian Religion, and you have therewith security and peace, and a strong defence against all these Evils. Now our Enquiry shall be concerning Religion, How it may be settled with Truth as to it self, with Comfort to all people, and with security to the Nation. We shall therefore endeavour to give a brief account of Religion, according to the Talent we have received. It must be known, First then, that it is of another Nature than those outward things we converse with; That is, It is not of the World, nor according to the fashion of the World; Neither doth it agree or associate with

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any thing that is external, but it is oppoſite and contrary thereto, even to all Forms of Worſhip of what kind ſoever; All Ceremonies & Conſtitutions of Men be they of what kind they will, But much more to the enjoyments of the preſent Life, Riches, and Honours, and the like; To all deſigns of getting a Name, Dominion, Power, Eſtates, &c. This manifeſtly appears throughout the Scripture, eſpecially the New Teſtament. Hence this pure Doctrine is called a New Creation, Regeneration, New Birth, &c. To ſhew that there is ſomthing old that muſt be ſhaken off, even the things of this world, which this is to ſucceed; For we cannot be ſaid to be born again, or Created again, unleſs that firſt Creation be made null and void, and brought to nothing, and this ſubſtituted in the room thereof: A man cannot Re-build his Houſe that has not firſt pulled down the old one. Hence our Lord makes it the firſt ſtep to come to him, to deny our ſelves, and take up our Croſs; That is, to caſt away all concern for the things of this Life, any deſire after them or ſatisfaction in them, and to be eſteemed nothing, of no account; yea Fools and Mad for his ſake: Hence alſo we may obſerve a perfect oppoſition in Scripture, between the Kingdom of Chriſt and of this World; thoſe things are called Spiritual, Heavenly, not Fading: Whereas in Contradiction to them, are *Put* Earthly, Carnal, Corrupt, *&c. Love* not the *World*, nor the *Things* of the *World*; if any man *Love* the *world*, the *Love* of the *Father* is not in him. Saith St. *John*, the Carnal man Savoureth not the things of God, they are Spiritually diſcerned; where we may obſerve that Contrariety which Logicians call *Contradictorie oppoſita*: Our Saviour alſo very diligently ſeperats them; ye cannot ſerve *God* and *Mammon*, bidding us take no care *What* we ſhall *Eat*, or *What* we ſhall *Drink*, or *What* we ſhall *Put on*: But bids us in oppoſition to theſe things, ſeek *Firſt* the *Kingdom of Heaven* and its *Righteouſneſs*, and all theſe things ſhall be added. I might be large in Collecting to this purpoſe, but let it ſuffice to obſerve: That we cannot imagine the Scrip-

ture to be more expreſs then it is, ſuppoſing it had been in the Mind of the Law-giver to make us fully ſenſible of the Contrariety and Inconſiſtency of outward enjoyments, with the Purity of a Chriſtian life; and had he not deſigned to Caution us diligently in this reſpect, it were impoſſible there ſhould be found ſuch expreſſions in his Will revealed: But here it muſt be noted, that the oppoſition is not of that nature; as that he that hath the Bleſſings of Wealth or Honour muſt preſently throw them away, but he *Muſt* throw them out of his mind, th t his heart and affections be not ſet upon them, which may be obtained by earneſt Prayer, and doing ſome good to others with the Enjoyments we poſſeſs: We muſt note farther, that if there be a Divine Command for forſaking of them, as in *Abraham* and the Apoſtles, or what is Equivalent thereto, as ſuffering the Will of God in times of Perſecution; they muſt be actually forſaken and thrown away: Farther, we muſt note as to our preſent deſigne, that this oppoſition ſo far prevails, as that it will be hardly or not at all poſſible for us to partake of this Heavenly Life, and be true Diſciples of Chriſt, if we make it our deſigne and buſineſs to ſeek after and fill our ſelves with earthly enjoyments; if we uſe them to the oppreſſion of others, to an unjuſt Dominion over our Brethren, if they are made the chiefe thing in our aime, ſought with Care, Deceit, Flattery, Lying, Freeing, *&c.* If we proſtitute all our Actions, and Conſcience it ſelf for an empty Tittle, and tranſient Revenue: And Generally (in the words of *Solomon*) he that maketh haſte to be Rich cannot be innocent. So that then this Contrariety between Fleſh and Spirit, between Religion and the World, is ſuch as they exclude each other: The man whoſe mind is taken up with Religion, values not the World, nor any thing therein; he wants them not, he deſires them not, he ſeeks them not: The man whoſe mind is taken up with the Affairs of the World, values not the things of Chriſt, they are fooliſhneſs unto him. Which thing alſo may be evinced by natural Light or Reaſon: For we ſee men that

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are given to Vices, run on without Deliberation, or regard of any other thing, to that immense degree, after satisfaction in their Vices; as not only to consume their Patrimony, though a Princely Revenue, but the Health of their Bodyes, and even the World it self, to be satisfied in their desires; thus the desires of Drunkenness and Lust, being infinite and never to be satisfied, but rather irritated by the fulness of Enjoyment; the desires tending vehemently to the fruition, the fruition giving birth to new desires: That if men were permitted to act in their full carier, and prosecute these Vices without restraint of Divine and Humane Laws, how soon would it run the World in Confusion and Ruine, and yet not a stop put to these desires, for they are Infinite. Thus the Covetous man desires to gain more and more from others and inclose to himself all things, till at length all things else (if his desires be fulfilled) must perish for want of subsistance: So the Ambitious man will have all things subjected to himself, and if the whole world be his Vassallage; yet his desires carry him still to grasp more Power and Dominion, as is reported of *Alexander*: Thus we see Vice in its true nature, tends to the destruction of all things, and consists in an inordinateness of the mind, whereby its desires are infinite, and not to be satisfied: The mind having forsaken God, and set up it self in its place, will thus have all things subservient to it, and is carried forth infinitely to obtain this end: And this inordinate mind and unlimited desiring and Lusting after that which it takes to, is that Corruption which was brought in by *Adam*'s Transgression, which we call Original Sin; which is no other then this inordinate mind forsaking God and lusting infinitely after its own fancies and devices. Now to help lost man, and free him from this Slavery of an inordinate mind, was the business of the second *Adam*; who came down from Heaven, took our Nature upon him in the form of a Servant, suffering upon the Cross that he might destroy the works of the Devil, and establish an ordinate regular mind in those that believe in him.

That is the Divine Nature whereof he was partaker, by his taking our Nature, is communicated to all Men that believe, which reſcues them from this ſlavery of their inordinate mind, and by virtue of which they ſubdue all thoſe deſires which were introduced by *Adams* tranſgreſsion; where we muſt take notice that we ſaid Chriſt in the Divine Nature was united with our Nature; and that by virtue of this Union it is communicated to all Men that believe, in oppoſition to *Adam*, whoſe tranſgreſsion redounded to all by not believing, or diſobedience; in which it muſt be farther noted, That it being a Divine Nature united to Chriſtians by Faith, 1. It is no other than the third Perſon in the Trinity the holy Ghoſt, which proceedeth from the Father and the Son, becauſe he operates this work in us. Obſerve 2*dly*. That we cannot do any good work of our ſelves, for our Regeneration and new Life, is this Union of the Divine Nature, the holy Spirit in our hearts, our good actions coming from the Principle of Life, muſt alſo be from him who is that life. Now we may ſee clearly what our Saviour ſays, they that worſhip the Father, ſhal worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth, even in the Spirit which is communicated to all Fleſh by the union of the Divine and humane Nature.

To ſpeak all in a word; *Adams* tranſgreſsion luſting after the forbidden Fruit, opened the dore to a luſting and inordinate mind in all his Poſterity, tending to ſubvert all things; This was taken away by the word becoming Fleſh, uniting the Divine and humane Nature, and thereby communicated to all men that believe, that the Sons of *Adam* in the power thereof might become the Sons of God, In the ſtrength of this Divine Nature to them that ask it, they are able to ſubdue thoſe inordinate inſatiable deſires of the mind, which are propagated from *Adam* to all Poſterity. Now we ſee what Religion is, even an imploring the Gracious Spirit to ſubdue theſe Corruptions we were addicted to, and a living in the exerciſe of this ſtrength and power againſt all aſſaults of our ſpiritual Enemies. Religion then is an internal exerciſe to keep the ſoul pure, and free

free from inordinate desires, clean and immaculate from all pollution, and so is the Mother of all moral duties; It is an Internal life whereby it does deny an external life, and abandons not only the enjoyments of the external life, but even the desires of them, which it only and principally aims at. Now let us consider what is Antichristian or Antichrist; The Name shews that it is opposite to Christ, and somthing set up instead of him, or against him; And sure if he will answer his name, he must overthrow that which Christ hath done and appointed, and set up somthing else in the room thereof, whatever he has a mind to, or his pleasure is to set up that is contrary thereto, which he has no other way to accomplish, but by bringing this Internal exercise of the Mind to some External exercise and performance; For thereby the Mind will forget the Internal work, being amused and taken up with External duties. Now that he may bring may bring Religion to an external performance, he needs no more then with some shew of zeal to excogitate certain Forms and Ceremonies, to set aside such Persons, such Places, such Times for Religious Duties; and when he has done this, he may excogitate other things at pleasure, and go on till he be able to trample upon the necks of Kings, and pretend to dispose of the whole Earth at his command: For from what we hove said, Religion being an Internal Exercise, and lying in every mans breast to Repent and Believe; It will follow, there is no necessity to set aside Men for Religions sake, though perhaps it may be done; But if Men shall make it necessary, then these things will follow, that there must be Places for them wherein to officiate necessarily, and there is as much necessity that as these men encrease in number, that these Places also encrease; But these men being idle, must have some outward Imployment, where we have a foundation for Missals, Rosaries, Prayings to Saints, Purgatory, &c. Likewise they must have a mantainance, and will look out to be Great and Glorious as other men; and will perhaps as the nature of Men is, use deceitful arts for this purpose; There is now a necessity

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this purpose; There is now a neceſſity that their Places of Officiating be adorned alſo with Rich and Magnificent Building, with Gold and Silver, Pictures and Images; Their Worſhip muſt be ſuitable to their State and Pomp in other things. Thus ſhall we have in that alſo a great deal of ſtatelineſs & Ceremonious Intricacies to amuſe mens minds; And laſtly, the Doctrine muſt not be diſſonant from all this, but ſuited to uphold the Fabrick; *Likewiſe it will be highly neceſſary to appoint ſome days to appear more gloriouſly than others; All men cannot attend every day an external Worſhip; Therefore let ſome days be ſet apart, wherein it may be cloathen in its beſt Robes. Now in the truth of Religion, no Chriſtian is free from the duty of keeping his mind pure, in any day, or time of the day, nor in any Place; much leſs ought we to think it is more tyed to one perſon than another; Or that by ſtudying in the Univerſitiy, where fooliſh Philoſophy does add to the corruption of mens minds: Men ſhould be freer from this Pollution, or fitter to free others there-from; and what will follow, but that they endeavour to confirm their own Authority and Conſtitutions by all means poſſible, and avenge the violation of a Crime againſt this external ſhew of Worſhip, with the greateſt puniſhments and rigour; But let every one contemn the Internal Worſhip as he will, and be be guiltleſs: So that all External Worſhip is in ſome degree or other Antichriſtian; But the leaſt evil is to be choſen in the Conſtitution of the Church, and all things ſo appointed, that there may be leaſt occaſion for the growth of this miſchief, and all things (as nearly as may be) ſo ordered, as Religion may appear in its native beauty, deveſted of the outward Man in its too much redundancy; and thereby ſomwhat preſſed and urg'd more fully to ſeek the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, that inward power which worketh all in all,

*This will bring on ſuch a Council as that of Tr. to eſtabliſh ſuch exorbitances by a Law.

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These things being thus laid down, we shall find what a Christian Church is, even the Assembly of such Persons, who denying the World and its corrupt Inclinations, have believed in Christ, and are Regenerate by his Spirit, keeping their minds regular and pure from the inclinations to vanity: Their Union is Internal through the Spirit of God, They are of one mind, and in perfect Love, being all cemented together by that one Spirit, built upon the Corner Stone, which is Christ; Their Government also must be according to that Spirit, being nothing but Unity, Love, Peace, Mutual Assistance, and delighting to benefit each other, in meekness submitting to each other; every Man is Servant to his Brother for his good; and he that is greatest, is he that is most serviceable; All things are done not only with Decency and order, but with the greatest sweetness, candour, and integrity that may be. Now because of humane infirmity, there will be Lapses; Charity will oblige that the offence be covered, and the Person offending upon his Repentance (privately manifested to any of the Company) be restored; But if after private and particular admonitions he continue pervicacious and impenitent, he is to be secluded, and cast off from the Company: Here is no External Violence to be used, no assistance from the secular arm, no imployment for the Magistrates Sword, but a plain and simple shutting him out of the Society, that will not be guided by the Laws of it, and thereby it becomes his own act and not theirs. But our Saviour hath given a greater Power with the Keys, not External concerning Wills and Testaments, &c. but Internal by the operation of his Spirit, whereby any Two of his Disciples agreeing together concerning any matter, whatever they establish on Earth, shall be confirmed in Heaven, be it what it will; So that if they ask in Faith; of which we have not found any instances as yet, we may hereafter: The Word is sure, and the Promise firm, but requires Faith in them that ask it. Thus it must needs be, that all its Jurisdiction and Power must be Internal, since the very design of Christian Religion, is to deny outward

outward things; But we have been long trained up in a contrary Doctrine, the Miniſters ſtill placing themſelves in the room of Chriſt, will be heads when they ought to bebut Members, and rule ſuch whom they ought to ſerve, ſeeking rather the Subſtance and Goods of the Flock, than the good of their Souls. This Society then being met together, their Exerciſe and Worſhip will be as agreeable as may be to their Religion; that is, Internal, I mean there will be not be need of any great pains or ſtudy to prepare for to entertain the Company with a ſtudied Diſcourſe of an hour long, but rather all being partakers of, and Regenerated into the Divine Nature, as was ſaid; it will be neceſſary to act ſuitable thereto in all plainneſs and ſimplicity; And further, this being that Life from whence all a Chriſtians actions flow, let every one ſubmit to the direction and guidance thereof; and ſo whoever hath a word of Exhortation, let the reſt hear it, as coming from the ſame Spirit which is given to all: Let him that hath a mind to ſpeak, ſpeak freely, but humbly alſo; and willing to forbear if it ſhall be ſignifyed to him; This *Paul* calls Prophecying, 1 *Cor.* 14. 31, For they may all Prophecy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. and the Spirits of theProphets are ſubject to the Prophets. As for the Miniſter or Biſhop, if this practice be mantained, it may ſoon be decided who he is, or ought to be, even he, whoſe Guifts, whoſe Zeal, whoſe Piety and wiſdom ſhall be noted as chief amongſt the reſt, and Honoured among them with general conſent as deſerving the firſt Rank: Now if there be diſſent in this regard, the beſt way to avoid ſtrife, is to decide it by Lot. According to what we have ſaid, his buſineſs will not be much, in regard of ſtudy, but in pains and labour, in cauſing them often to meet together, to exhort them earneſtly and diligently, to heal thoſe that are fallen, viſit the ſick, comfort the weak, take care for the poor, inſtruct the Ignorant, with many ſuch duties which accompany this weighty Charge. He earneſtly endeavours to build up the Inward man, nd is ſo far from admitting Ceremonies in Religion, that he

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wisheth them far excluded from the civil practise of men. There are but two appointed and those only necessary, Baptism or washing with Water, to shew our being cleansed by the Holy Ghost from *Adams* sin, rendered pure from all Pollution, and is the admission into this Holy Society: The other is the Supper, signifying to us, and also conveying to us by Bread and Wine, the fruit of our Lords being bruised for us, and farther confirming and strengthning of us in his Power to resist all Corruption; both which he will administer to such as understand what they do, and are sincere in the doing thereof: All that we have said may easily appear to be the Constitution of the Primitive Church: They were so united in the Spirit of Love and Peace as to have all things common, and to be a wonder to the Heathens; who would say of them, see how these Christians Love one another. Likewise that every man had liberty to speak in the Congregation, appears by what St. *Paul* saith of Prophesying; also the Apostles as they removed from place to place, took care to appoint such Pastors or Bishops in Church they were about to leave title to, as being Pious, Elderly and Zealous; might thereby have the best take care of the rest, and to serve them in that Office: But when large Revenues came to be annexed to these Places; he was the fittest man among many pretenders, whom the Secular Authority did commend whether a Shepherd or a Wolfe, 'twas not regarded, But thus much to shew what is truth in Religion, and in its practise thereof, which we are gone so far from as to be Ignorant of the notion, but much more of the Actions agreeable to it. But it is good to know it, though we do not for the present embrace it; yet to look whence we are fallen, may be some means of amendment, and to consider well thereof is the first step to it. At least from hence it will appear very Just and Reasonable, to remove those unnecessary Additions, to cut off those superflous Branches, those redundant Revenues of Clergy, which tend to destroy Religion: It will also appear, that in proposing a Hundred Pounds a year to the Clergy; I am so

ſar from being beyond the mark, that I am ſhort of it, and the danger is ſtill more in the largeneſs of the Revenue, then in the ſhortneſs of it. But it will be ſaid Miniſters will not be ſatisfied therewith. Neither will unreaſonable men be ſatisfied with any thing. Biſhops were never yet ſatisfied with the Power and Revenues they had unjuſtly obtained, but were continually Proling for more: Their Grand Captain the Pope, will not eaſily ſay it is enough: Should his Greatneſs be more widely extravagant then it is? In the mean time let the Magiſtrate take care to give ſuch limits to their deſires, as may come neareſt to the bounds of Truth; and ſince they cannot govern themſelves in the Fortunes they enjoy, he ſhall do well to place them in ſuch Fortunes, as they ſhall have leaſt opportunity to abuſe; ſuch as may have a tendency to cauſe them to reflect and conſider who they are, and what they are ſet about. Thus not only the neceſſity of the Civil State require that the Lands of the Clergy be alienated, but likewiſe the Truth of Religon does more preſſingly urge it: The beſt means to ſecure and eſtabliſh which, if any outward means will do it, is to allow the Officers and Miniſters thereof ſuch advanges from the World, as that they prove not Temptations to draw them aſide to a diſregard of their Office, to Pride, Malice, Covetouſneſs, *&c.* And on the other hand may keep them from being burdenſome to themſelves by the ſtraitneſs of their Fortune, or to their Neighbours for Relief: I have known a Miniſter, his Wife and Children Maintained out of Thirty Pound a year, with that Contentment to themſelves, and with ſuch eſteem amongſt their Neighbours: That though other Clergy men exceed him in Wealth, yet he much exceeds them in the abundance of his Enjoyments; if they are before him in Honour and large Poſſeſſions; he is much before them in Happineſs and Content, which is the fulneſs that all things tend to adminiſter. For theſe men whilſt they teach others, are themſelves yet to learn what it is to live Well and Happily; It is not to have much or Great things, which with their in-

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creaſe, increaſe the deſires of them, and ſo there is no reſt, and conſequently no ſatisfaction: But it is to have a mind ſufficient to it ſelf, and well governed, making uſe of the preſent enjoyments, without auxiety for the future, and cutting off theſe reſtleſs deſires in the bud, which if proſecuted ſerve only for a ſnare and torment, as Heathens have obſerved: For a concluſion we ſhall propoſe theſe particulars.

1. From what has been ſaid, it appears that Chriſtian Religion is beſt upheld by ſmall Revenues in the Miniſters of it; becauſe its deſigne is to ſhake off all the outward things of this World.

2. Thing, that no Pomp or Ceremony, no Altar, no Surplice, *&c.* are required in the Chriſtian Religion: The reaſon is, Religion being an Internal work, and a change of the mind from outward things, and inconſiſtant therewith: To what purpoſe are theſe outward forms and Ceremonies? what Reference have they? Unleſs it be to amuſe the mind, and frame a beliefe in men that Religion (quite contrary to the nature of it) conſiſts in externalls, whereby (to the deſtruction of Religion) the mind ſhall be drawn forth into external appearances, to cauſe it delight in that Pomp and Vanity which it ſhould forſake; and by this means it will be blinded ſo much, as not once to look within it ſelf, but thinks all is well where there is nothing but rottenneſs and Corruption. If you ſay that theſe externals are repreſentations of the Internal work, and ſerve to lead us to them. I anſwer, it is a Prepoſterous and indirect means; for what is ſo near me as I am to my ſelf? And why cannont I deſcend into my own mind every moment, without taking that for an advantage which brings ruine with it? As Croſſes, Garments, *&c.* For Ceremonies are not only needleſs, but miſchievous, cheating and blinding the World, whereby they let go the ſubſtance and embrace the ſhaddow.

3. Miniſters or Biſhops have no concern in publick Affairs, or in Secular Juriſdiction; their buſineſs is to preſs

Faith in Christ, both in themselves and others; to remove the Corruption fallen upon mens minds: what duty then lyes upon them for Secular busines, or what claime have they to it? The nature of their Profession and Doctrine does divest them thereof as much as is possible, being quite opposite to it; forbidding even too much concerne for their Private Affairs in the World; which shews that it is their extravagancy and degeneracy when they thrust themselves into publick Imployment, which has such tendency to overcharge their minds with that which they should be altogether cleansed from, as we have before shewed.

4. It is almost needless here to say there is no such Power of Excommunication as is now in use, being made to uphold a lye and an unjust usurpation in Secular Affaires, to lacky after Fees, and to serve the Secular Interest of the Clergy: which according to the Truth of their Imployment is none at all; we have shewed before, what this Excommunication is: And certainly the true Church as well as the Government thereof being Inrernal and Spiritual, not External and Secular, all the Acts of its Jurisdiction must be agreeable thereto.

5. That Method of Preaching, is a prejudice to the Life and Power of Religion, wherein men set forth themselves by Studied Discourses, with Ornaments of History, Rhetorick, subtile Disputations, nice Distinctions, &c. For by these things the mind is taken up with things that are Circumstantial and External, and thereby lets slip those things that are Internal and of nearer Concernment, and therefore has a stamp of of the Beast upon it; tending to inhance the value of all other External things which men ought to deny, causing them to love and embrace what they should cast away, to desire more earnestly such things as they should be mortified unto; and consequently they will run more swiftly then before to the pit of Destruction, where Antichrist and the false Prophet is: So that at the end, these men are worse then at the beginning they might have been; had they not been trained up in such a Religion.

ligion as this, and it were better for them not to have known the way of Truth, then having known it, to make it the Instrument of more enlarged wickedness; and of going yet farther from God then at first.

6. The Minister or Bishop takes no honour to himself; all that he is or hath, he hath received it, it is the purchase of the the blood of Christ, exhibited according to the word in the second Covenant to all that belive; he seeks not reward nor laboureth for gain, having devested himself of Worldly and outward things: He Governs the people, he is set over, not with force but meekness; he useth no means of Compulsion, but draweth them gently; he pretends not power over their Wills, but an Office to perswade, but if men will destroy themselves, he is guiltless, doing what is suitable to his Office, to reclaime them, alwayes willing to help them, alwayes with open Arms to receive such as come to the Church, and restore such as are fallen, Lamenting and Praying for such whose Miscarriages are from their own Wills, and not in his power to help.

7. The last thing we observe from what is said before, is that it is impossible there should be any Difference or Sect in the Christian Religion; and if you find any amongst them, say assuredly *Inimicus homo fecit hoc*, it is a stranger to the Truth and proceeds from some other cause. The reason is plain, for what occasion can be imagined of Division or Schisme amongst those who all conspire only in this, to keep their minds Pure and clean from Corruption, by Faith in Jesus Christ, and in the power of that Holy Spirit, which is one in all of them: From which oneness divided through many members, there must needs be unity: But you will say, the present time testifies the Division that is among Christians. I answer, that such as are Christians in pretence only, may divise a hundred more Sects and Parties: They are men that will inspite of the Scriptures serve two Masters, God and *Mammon*, the Lord and *Baal*. Men who are Christians by the halfes, that will serve

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the Lord, yet not without a Babel of their own setting up. In Briefe, the Presbyterians, Independants, Anabaptists, *&c.* Will add to the Scriptures something that is meerly of their own fancies, imagining the Scripture to sound according to their prejudice and preconception, Now if one man will set up one thing, and say this is according to Scripture; another man with the same reason may set up another thing of his own hatching and framing, and say the like, and so we may go on in *Infinitum*: If the Bishops say, such and such Ceremonies are to be used in the Church, seeming to them decent and according to Scripture, The Presbyterians are not obliged to think as they do, nor take the same measures of Decency as they do, and therefore may claim Priviledge as well as the other of a second Constitution, which perhaps will not so well agree with Independants; and therefore with as much Right may they set up a third, and so every man as his Fancy leads him: In the mean time this difference is not in Religion it self, but in the Braines and Fancies of men, that love to cloth and dress Religion according to their own fashion; and there cannot be a unity till men shall come to throw away all these their delightful Imaginations, and return to the obedience of that Spirit of Life and Truth, which proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and is only able to make us wise unto Salvation. There is no unity but in this; the occasion of our divisions, was by departing therefrom, and our returning to it, will be our advancement to our right minds, to live in unity, in love, in Peace, in serving the Lord our God with one heart, and one mind, rejoycing before him continually.

Now it should methinks shame these Teachers of what denomination soever, that set up a Doctrine of their own framing though out of the Litteral Word; if they consider, that after all their contrivances and designes, their study and labour, and spending so much sweat and words in the Pulpit, it is as impossible for them to make men Believe, or Holy, or Powerful to resist the least Temptation, as it was in the Priests of *Baal* after

after their Bellowings and howlings to obtain the pure fire from Heaven to consume the Sacrifice; and I wish they would no longer (with them) halt between two opinions; but if God be to be Worshiped, let him be only Worshiped and entirely Worshiped, and made not only the object, but to fill all Circumstances of his Worship.

Thus I have endeavoured according to my Talent to shew, with what plainness I could the nature of Christian Religion, and to preserve it from the mistakes it lyes under at this day, by Episcopal Government, and shewn that the necessity of the Affairs of the Nation conspire with Religion to abolish it; and let us understand the voice of God and what he requires, when he has thus hedged in our way, that we cannot divert to any other path, but with great Detriment: He hath proclaimed the Truth of his Religion and Worship, which he will no longer suffer to be oppresst with unjust usurpation: If the Government shall think good to interest themselves in his cause, it will be well for them, but if not, he will find other means and make way for the accomplishment of his will. And let not the Bishops and their Party say, that every dangerous change in the Common-wealth, still makes them the first objects of the assault, and begins through their sides to ruine the Commonwealth. For the thing is contrary, and he that will bring any Reformation in Church or State, must begin with them who generally have been the disturbers of both, and alwayes the strongest opposers of any thing that tended much to the benefit of either; so that any thing that is good and truly Profitable, must needs call for their removal, as its first step to advancement.

How great the benefit would be of casting off the Bishops Courts, and that unsupportable Yoke the Subject is enslaved to by means thereof; though all men are in some measure sensible, yet those only can fully understand who have felt the Lash of it; and I think, there is no man that considers the abominable Corruption in those Courts, that any thing is carried

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which way the man desires that gives the most Money, that all such persons as are of any Rank, or Fortune, or Esteem in the World are freed from the molestations of these Courts, only such as are poor and have little, must have this addition to their Misery, to maintain the Credit of this unjust Authority, by the expence of their time, and that little lively-hood they have; whereby it is plainly to be seen, that they are not keept to rectifie Disorders, or ill Manners, as they pretend; But purely for support of Episcopal Authority without any farther end, or which is worse, to Grind the poor, and to rob such as are ready to starve.

And after all that has been said, shall we imagine that the Magistrate does ill to take away Bishops Lands, or is their any cause to doubt what he ought, or what is his duty to do in this case: rather do not the rules of Justice, and Conscience oblidge him thereto, with the strongest obligation; for what greater obligation can there happen to a Magistrate than to honour his Creatour, to obey him from whom he has received that trust he is invested with, and to take away all remainders of an unsavory Idolatrous Worship What can oblige him more then to procure the Happiness and welfare of his Subject in all cases, where it may be done with safely to himself and his Government, with Justice and Piety, and without injury to any, ought he not in Conscience to establish a Harmony and Concord amongst his people, tending to their peace and settlement and manifold satisfaction. Ought he not like a good Physitian, to take away that ill humour that has layne so long corroding upon their Bowells: Or is there any other or better means of laying a solid foundation of durable empire and undisturbed Government, then in the prosperity and contentment of the people: Do not all our Laws and degrees of Magistracy, and even Civil Society it self tend to this end; is not this that bond that at first linked men into Civility, made them reasonable and sociable, and void of this, they slide insensibly into confusion, and return to the Savage nature of such as Prey upon

upon their own kind: For such is said to be the condition of our Ancestors before they understood the benefit of concord, and usefulness of well ordered Government; which restrains Injustice by Laws, and gives Life to whatever may benefit mankind. But I cannot think that barbarous Age so bad, when force prevailed and strength of Arme bore down all before it, when nothing could be called a mans own longer then the absence of a more puissant Champion gave him leave to enjoy it; when weakness and innocence was the greatest calamity and occasion of suffering continual Insolences and outrages: When Robbery and Stealing gave a just Title to all things a man could Possess, and the security thereof lay only in the strength of Possessour, if we compare these times with what has succeeded under Episcopal Jurisdiction, we shall find the same exorbitances, but perhaps more grievous coming upon the Stage, the Scene only altered; since unrighteousness was established by a Law, and backed with Religion; since Piety and the fear of God was thought worthy the greatest Punishment, Innocence and Humility the greatest guilt; to open the mouth against vanity and wickedness was the greatest Heresie: Since men have acted Lyes with Applause, and Deceit with Honour and Remuneration, professing Christ, yet trampling him under their feet, renouncing the World, yet insatiable in their desires after it, pretending Humility, yet insulting over the greatest Princes: Encouraging a contempt of the Almighty their Creatour and Redeemer, filling their Coffers by Indulgences and Pardons thereof, and in the mean time the violation of the least Punctilio enjoyned by them, must be worthy of death: I could enlarge upon these things, but why should I do it: To thee, O Lord Vengeance belongeth: Shew thy self, O God of our Salvation.

There are two things more (which are wanting) to give us a vigorous and lasting health; one is the Regulating the Laws, and the abuses of the numerous pretenders to it. For the first, in my Apprehension, it were necessary that the beginning of

every Kings Reigne, ſhould be accompanied with a Cleanſing, Digeſting and Compiling a certain Perfect Body of the Law, that it might be ſomething certain, and that it might not be lyable to the Quirkes and Fallacies of ſo many buſie Deceivers, and alſo that it may be brought as near as may be to the preſent Genius and Humour of men, by that means that we be not governed by an Antique Humour, as we would not be clothed in their faſhion. To Regulate the abuſes therein, and hinder Multiplicity of Suites; the means may be to appoint Arbitrations, that no Suit ſhall be in any of the Kings Courts under a hundred Pounds: But that the Parties at variance for any value under that, be made to chuſe each his Arbitratour, and to enter into bond, to approve the Arbitrators ſhall determine, only this bond in caſe Covenants be not performed, to be brought into the higher Courts and Sentence ſtrictly paſſed thereupon; alſo in caſe one Party refuſe this Arbitration, that then the other proceed in the Kings Court, and that the refuſer be proceeded againſt upon Evidence given, as Nonſuited. Some ſuch effectal application the Corruption of Judicature and increaſe of Law Suites do ſeem to require. The Benefits whereof will be, 1. That people ſhall in a manner decide themſelves their diſagreements, it being done by thoſe whom themſelves chuſe. 2. The Caſe may be more fully known, being near the place and Juſtice more exactly rendered by that means. 3. It ſaves great Expences and long Journeys. 4. It may be a means that men run not out of their Eſtates by long Suits. 5. It may keep a good Ballance of Money in the Pockets of meaner men, which tends to the advancement of Trade, and ſo Lawyers may be prevented of drawing too much thereof into their Pockets, where it is either uſeleſs to the publick, or manifeſtly prejudicial by Uſury and exaction.

Likewiſe it were highly requiſite the Univerſities were looked into, which are become Seminaries of Debauchery, rather then good Learning or good Manners to the Nation. They have

have too great a Temptation to Debauchery from the too large Beneficence of their Founders, which would be Retrenched, and part of the Revenues, and also of their Colledges better setled, upon another designe *viz.* for maintaining Professors in all manner of Gentile Heroick exercises, that young Gentlemen may not only know Arts and Sciences, but also to Fence, Ride, Marshall an Army and the like; continual reading flats and deads the mind, makes it unfit for Action: But this exercise will whet and inlarge it, and make men capable of being imployed in the Common-wealth, and I perswade my self that these two being conjoyned, Reading and Exercise would make a wise active people. It were advisable that Tutours trouble not their Pupills with an uncertain and Pedantick Philosophy, and with the Fabulous and Futilous Authors of Hetheniſme. But rather with History, Sacred and Profane: Mathematicks, Sacred Philology; Languages, Policy, *&c.* But above all to instruct them in Religion and matters of the Bible, and of Salvation.

The difference of Habit in their degrees, serve to puff them up, and cause them to carry a Magisterial Pride throughout their Lives, every little adds to a mind already corrupted.

For a Conclusion, let Politicians enquire whether it be safe and requisite in a Common-wealth to allow of two Authorities and two distinct orders of Government in the same body Politick, I suppose they will find it noxious, if the consider that the Stability and Perpetuity of a Common wealth depends upon its oneness or unity, which is like the straight line of the Mathematicians, the foundation of all other their operations; now this oneness is so near the foundation of a Common-wealth, that any receding from it, most needs have a dangerous influence upon the whole Fabrick, being a weakning and loosning the Foundations; and the effects must follow that a violent Push of Storm and Wind will through this defect endanger its overthrow: For this Episcopal Government being established upon

It is a Common-wealth in a Common-wealth explained by the general consent of all Politicians.

on different principles and different Intereſt to the reſt of the Government, with another Authority then that of the ſupream Authority; it will follow, that though it may agree well for a time in ſubordination to the ſupream Authority, yet there is a gap open for Diviſion, which will not be without its evil effects; when any unuſual accident ſhall happen in the Common-wealth to its diſturbance; thus we know by vertue of this Authority, and from this principle of Diviſion in the Government, our Kings to have been thrown off, the whole Kingdom diſturbed and made Feudatary to a Forreigne Authority, as in King *John*: In thoſe times it played with its Batteries upon our Kings, but ſince the Reformation it has turned the Engines of Malice upon the People, and cauſe them to begin a War. In briefe, Epiſcopacy being a Government of it ſelf, diſtinct from the ſupream and lawful Authority, without any juſt Title or pretenſions (all which come within the verge of the Civil Magiſtrate) it muſt needs (to ſupport it ſelf, for it cannot be idle) trouble the Waters that it may have the better Fiſhing: If you ſay it is neceſſary for Maintaining Religion, the Anſwer is, I have ſhewed before that Religion needs no ſuch ſupports: And further, that the firſt Inſtituters of our Religion, never uſed nor claimed any ſuch Authority, but with the greateſt ſubmiſſion yeilded to the Secular Power in all things. The Chriſtian Religion tends to benefit mankind with all good things temporal and eternal; it is perfect goodneſs and perfect unity, and it is impoſſible a principle of Diviſion ſhould proceed from it: And therefore, thoſe Diviſions in Common-wealths can proceed from no other cauſe then the author of Diviſion, who having at firſt ſeparated from the Holy God, makes it his buſineſs to fill all things with the effects of that Diviſion. But you will ſay, the Church under Chriſt and his Apoſtles was perſecuted and hated. The Anſwer is, that the Tempter made the firſt proffer, the Kingdoms of the earth, and the Glories of them, to

There is no Kingdom in *Europe* that has not ſome time or other taſted the ill effects of it.

our

our Saviour if he would fall down and Worship him, which our Saviour refusing to do and his Apostles; he was forced to keep them till he met such as admiring the beguiling Temptation; would submit to the Condition.

But Politicians will tell us, that all mutation in Government goes not unaccompanied with danger; to which we may Answer: That this happens when Circumstantials are changed for other Circumstantialls, as I may call them: As the danger is nothing so much in taking away any thing in a Common-wealth that is superfluous, but in the bringing in a thing superfluous. (Thus the taking away the Ceremonies in *Scotland* at the Reformation, was without any great noise, but the obtruding a new Lyturgy was not without Tumult and War; the like we have seen in *England*, the pulling down of Abbies and Monasteryes in the time of *Henry* the 8*th*. and alienating the Lands of the Church, was done with safety and silence enough: But the practises of bringing in new Ceremonies in the time of *Charles* the first, was followed with a Bloody War, & wonderful change of Affairs, whereas the contrary Acts were a kind of Stability to the Kings Throne; and generally it may be observed throughout *Europe* in *France*, *Germany*, and other places that the Reformation, and taking away what was superfluous in the Government, was not only done peaceably, but also without the least change of Government, only perhaps it was better secured thereby; whereas all attempts of bringing in, or re-establishing those Futilous Ceremonies and Devices, were alwayes accompanied with long and Bloody Wars.) Or when a part of the Government is changed, and something put into the room of it of a different Nature. 2. Not when Circumstantials are abolished without addition or Substitution of others. 3. Not when it is to the gust and liking of the greatest part of the Nation. 4. Nor when it is recompensed with great advantage to all the people. And besides, let us consider what *Henry* the 8*th*. has done in this kind, being in far worse Circumstances, and in much more dangerous Condition then we are: As first very Potent Adversaries abroad, the *Pope*, the *Emperour*, the King

Knig of *Spain*. 2. This whole Nation had ſat down a long time under that beliefe which he oppoſed, and ſucked it in with their milk, that this change muſt needs appear monſtrous and formidable; which would not only bring a change upon the outward Condition of the Nation, but mens minds alſo: They muſt change thoſe thoughts and opinions which were almoſt as natural to them, as the Aire they Breathed in: Whereas in our Condition, there is nothing to be feared upon this account from a Forreigne Enemy: Neither ſhall we have need oppoſe any Preconceptions, or row againſt the tide of the common ſentiments of the Nation: Add to this the benefit we may reap by it, whereas the former Reformation was effected by a bare preheminence of Power and Dominion: and ſo looked ſomething like Tyranny. Farther, we want not inſtances in the Churches of the Reformation that were in *Bohemia* and thoſe parts, how a Chriſtian Church may moſt fully agree with a ſubmiſſion of all external Juriſdiction to the Magiſtrate, and live in excellent Harmony with the Common-wealth, of which they are Members, their Intereſt (not differing therefrom as in the Epiſcopacy) but bound up in all things that concerne the external Government with it. Which is done, 1. By giving them a competent maintenance equally divided to all. 2. Let them chuſe one of the moſt ſober and wiſe amongſt them (for ſuch a time) to have the Inſpection over them and the affairs of the Church. 3. In their Conſiſtories or publick Meetings, let a Secular imployed by the King be alwayes preſent. 1. To ſee they meddle not with State Affairs. 2. To provide that no dammage redound to the Publick by Heates or Controverſies. Thus ſhall we have a truer and more perfect Religion, a ſurer foundation of Peace, a firmer Eſtabliſhment of Government, and laſting ſupport of Unity and Commerce in all degrees amongſt us. Now the Author all Bleſſings, publick and private, grant us Grace to open our Eyes, that we may ſee the things that belong to our Peace, which is thus conjoyned with the Honour

of

of his Name; and let him that is as great in power as goodneſs, ſtrengthen our Hearts and our Hands, that all of us may confer our aſſiſtance to the pulling down that great Babylon of *Rome*, and this of our own Nation, which are as well a diſhonour to him, as the Obſtacles of our Peace

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FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 2. line 31. read *at another*, p. 3. l. 24. r. *ſubſtituted*, p. 5. l. 18. r. *or thus*: *In*, and l. 30. for *And* r. *But*, p. 6. l. 2. for *And* r. *That* p. 9. l. 7. r. *Recovery*, p. 10. l. 19. r. *care Diſburſed*, l. 12. r. *imployed*, p. 13. l. 1. r. *is Right*, p. 18. l. 1. r. *things concerning*, l. 16. r. *Receding there with* p. 19. l. 3. r. *laſt*, *abuſed*, l. 24. r, *be adhered to*, l. 30. r. *Wives and Child*, p. 24. l. 24. r. *Feeing*, p. 28. l. 13. r. *clothed*, l. 33. *thereby men may be ſomewhat*, p. 29. l. 31. r. *that they ask in Faith: Of which, if* l. 33. r. *But thus*, p. 30. l. 8. r. *will not be*, p. 33. l. 19. *Leave*, *as*, l. 20. r. *beſt title to take*, l. 25. r. *in the Prac.* p. 40. l. 22. r. *Jafety*.